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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

ORIGIN OF SPANISH INFLUENZA.—A writer in the *Medical Record* says that the present plague of Spanish influenza is similar to an epidemic of pneumonia plague which broke out in Harbin, China, in 1910 and spread rapidly through northern China. He suggests that the plague may have been brought to the west by some of the 200,000 Chinese coolies, collected from the northern part of China, where the disease has raged at intervals since 1910, and sent to France as laborers. Some of them went via the Pacific, across Canada and the United States by way of the Atlantic to their destination. No doubt many of them were captured by the Germans, hence the outbreak of the disease in the German army and its rapid spread in Spain. It is said to be the first epidemic of influenza Spain has ever had. Our soldiers and sailors returning from the battlefields may have brought it with them. Our people are virgin soil and have no acquired immunity to this new germ, hence every patient should be quarantined and every effort made to prevent the spread of the infection.

MUMPS.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* in a synopsis of an article in a Paris medical journal, gives the result of experience with 700 cases of mumps in soldiers. Careful bacteriological examination showed that mumps is a polymicrobial infection of the blood. Sometimes the lymph nodes below the salivary glands became infected, swelled and even suppurated; bronchitis and pneumonia occasionally appeared. The spleen was almost invariably enlarged; the early hypertrophy of this organ may aid in the differential diagnosis.

SHOCK.—Experiments of French surgeons have proved that the state of shock is not due to hemorrhage alone, nor to any single cause but to the combination of the concussion, pain, hemorrhage, etc., and added to these the anesthesia, operative shock and tox-infection. Preventive measures are, in part, warming the wounded, giving pre-operative treatment and watching over the evolution of shock by observing the behavior of the blood pressure.

RADIUM IN UTERINE CANCER.—An Italian medical journal reports the result in the use of radium in fifty cases of inoperable or recurring uterine cancer. In forty-two cases with an interval since of from one to three years, sixteen seemed to be both clinically and

anatomically cured. In fourteen cases the tumor had been checked and had grown smaller.

CHLORINE AND SUTURES.—The *Medical Record* in an article on the action of chlorine on suture materials says that care should be observed in the use of chlorinated lime and its modifications as antiseptics when it is applied after suturing. Free chlorine is destructive to dead animal and vegetable matter and so is very liable to destroy sutures, or render them worthless. Silkworm gut and chrome-gut, twisted silk and plain catgut were rendered absolutely useless for any purpose whatsoever. The giving way of sutures in a gaping wound, or a large abdominal wound, might have serious consequences.

A FLYING OPERATING UNIT.—Airplanes have been used to convey the wounded from the battlefield to the dressing station, or hospital. To the French medical service belongs the honor of having the first avion, or surgical airplane to carry aid to the wounded. It is designed to carry a complete surgical equipment, with three men, sterilized instruments, gowns, dressings, a roentgenographic outfit, in short, everything needed to perform eight emergency operations. There is also an autoclave, a reservoir of sterilized water, accumulators and steam sterilizer.

FOOD VALUE OF CANDY.—The *New York Medical Journal* makes out a strong case for the usefulness of candy. Sugar is a highly concentrated food, easily digested and on account of the rapidity with which it is assimilated quickly relieves fatigue. Six ounces of sugar is equal in food value to a quart of milk or a pound and a quarter of lean beef. Its fuel value is 1810 calories. The chocolate and nuts often used in candies have high food value, approximately 1500 calories per pound for nuts. The soldiers' desire for something sweet is accounted for by the fact that during violent exercise, or exhausting labor, the sugar in the blood is very heavily drawn upon to supply the body with the necessary fuel, hence the craving for sugar in some easily assimilated form. Swiss mountain climbers always include lump sugar and chocolate in their outfit. Children should have candy frequently rather than at long intervals when the longing for it tempts them to overeat. Its use as a dessert after a meal is highly desirable.